

DIRECT CARE JOB TITLES

Direct Care Workers are known by many names, depending on the care setting, educational background of the worker, or the population being served. This fact sheet provides an overview of job titles commonly used and a brief summary of related issues.

Direct Care Workforce: umbrella term for professional caregivers and service providers, primarily in long-term care, such as personal assistants, direct support professionals, attendants, respite workers, and home care aides. Nursing assistants, including certified nursing assistants (CNA) working in acute care or long-term care settings, and home health aides are often included in the direct care workforce. Workers providing homemaking and chore services may also be included in this category. Other terms used to describe these professions are *Paraprofessional Healthcare Workforce* and *Direct Service Workforce*.

Usage of Job Titles by Various Agencies:

<i>Direct Care Professional</i> –	Arizona Direct Care Workforce Initiative www.azdes.gov/aaa/directcare.asp
<i>Direct Service Workforce</i> –	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), National Direct Service Workforce (DSW) Resource Center (www.dswresourcecenter.org).
<i>Personal & Home Care Aide</i> –	U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos173.htm)
<i>Direct Care Workers</i> –	Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (www.paraprofessional.org)
<i>Caregiver</i> –	National Private Duty Association (NPDA) www.privateduty.org
<i>Attendant</i> –	Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) www.azahcccs.gov
<i>Home Care Aide</i> –	National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) www.nahc.org
<i>Direct Support Professional (DSP)</i> –	ANCOR (www.ancor.org/)

Issues:

- There are many different labels and job titles, which are not always associated with clear occupational profiles or with a clear image in the public's mind.
- The term caregiver is widely used for non-medical direct care professionals, but it is also used for any health care provider as well as family and informal caregivers.
- The term caregiver tends not to evoke the image of a trained professional.
- The public and many professionals working in acute health care are not sufficiently informed about the responsibilities of direct care workers outside of acute care.
- Different professional groups and consumer groups prefer different terms.
 - Consumers with developmental disabilities and their advocates prefer the terms direct support professional or personal assistant because they feel they need support and assistance, whereas the term care is associated with illness and being a medical patient.
 - The elderly and individuals with chronic illness or Alzheimer's disease prefer the term caregiver, as do the workers providing the services.

Initiatives to Standardize Job Titles:

Associations, consumer groups, and States have at times proposed the use of uniform job titles or the development of occupational profiles.

- National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) – Offers training guidelines and credentialing for DSP-Registered, DSP-Certified, and DSP-Specialist. (www.nadsp.org/credentialing/)
- National Association for Homecare & Hospice (NAHC) – Offers training guidelines and credentialing for home care aides. (www.nahc.org/education/home.htm#cred)
- National Private Duty Association (NPDA) – Proposed Levels of Care Guidelines for Private Duty Agencies, comprised of Level 1 Caregiver (companion or homemaker), Level 2 Caregiver (personal care assistant / attendant), and Level 3 Caregiver (home health aide or certified nurse aide).
- **Arizona Direct Care Workforce Initiative (AZ-DCW)** – This initiative is supported by the Department of Economic Security, AHCCCS, the Department of Health Services, the Direct Care Workforce Committee, employers and colleges. It promotes training for direct care professionals and studies workforce issues and related concerns. Partner organizations are using the umbrella terms *direct care workforce* and *direct care professional*, referring to specific occupations as appropriate, including *caregiver*, *direct support professional*, *personal care assistant*, and *attendant*. See: www.azdes.gov/aaa/directcare.asp